Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-39. (Canceled)

40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the sample is a tissue sample.

42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the preparation is a prepared tissue specimen.

43. (Currently Amended) A method for manipulating a sample comprising:

> superimposing at least one digital, microscopic image of a section of at least one
>> preparation on an image of a surface of the preparation;
> placing at least one marking on the superimposed image, which marking defines a desired
>> position at which at least one sample is to be punched out of the preparation;
> punching out at least one sample from at least one defined position of at least one
>> preparation with a needle; and
> inserting said at least one sample into a hole in a sample carrier comprising at least one
>> hole The method of claim 40, wherein the digital, microscopic image comprises
>> several segments assembled prior to superimposing the image on the image of the
>> surface of the preparation.

44. (Currently Amended) A method for manipulating a sample comprising:

> superimposing at least one digital, microscopic image of a section of at least one
>> preparation on an image of a surface of the preparation;
> placing at least one marking on the superimposed image, which marking defines a desired
>> position at which at least one sample is to be punched out of the preparation;
> punching out at least one sample from at least one defined position of at least one
>> preparation with a needle; and
> inserting said at least one sample into a hole in a sample carrier comprising at least one
>> hole The method of claim 40, wherein the digital, microscopic image has been

straightened or had artifacts eliminated prior to superimposing the image on the image of the surface of the preparation.

45.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the marking and/or its coordinates are saved in a database, together with an identifier for the preparation.

46.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein several digital section images can be selected for each preparation.

47.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein a display scale of section images, surface images and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.

48.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein an orientation of section images, surface images and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.

49.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be displaced.

50.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein color of section images, surface images, and/or superimposed images employed in the method can be modified.

51.   (Currently Amended) A method for manipulating a sample comprising:

        superimposing at least one digital, microscopic image of a section of at least one
                preparation on an image of a surface of the preparation;
        placing at least one marking on the superimposed image, which marking defines a desired
                position at which at least one sample is to be punched out of the preparation;
        punching out at least one sample from at least one defined position of at least one
                preparation with a needle; and
        inserting said at least one sample into a hole in a sample carrier comprising at least one
                hole The method of claim 40, wherein a level of translucency of a surface image
                in relation to a section image can be modified.

52.   (Currently Amended) A method for manipulating a sample comprising:

superimposing at least one digital, microscopic image of a section of at least one

> preparation on an image of a surface of the preparation;

placing at least one marking on the superimposed image, which marking defines a desired

> position at which at least one sample is to be punched out of the preparation;

punching out at least one sample from at least one defined position of at least one

> preparation with a needle; and

inserting said at least one sample into a hole in a sample carrier comprising at least one

> hole ~~The method of claim 40~~, wherein transparency of a section image can be
> modified.

53.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein patient information or equivalent assigned to an identifier for the preparation, is displayed in combination with the superimposed image.

54.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the placed marking is characterized.

55.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 54, wherein the placed marking is numbered consecutively with other placed markings.

56.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the placed marking can be selected and erased.

57.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the placed marking can be selected and modified.

58.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein at least one annotation can be assigned to the placed marking.

59.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein a sample carrier for the insertion of the punched-out sample can be assigned to the placed markings.

60.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein a specific hole in the sample carrier can be assigned to the placed marking.

61.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein holes for samples in the sample carrier are arranged in a pattern and said pattern is formed by arrangement of the holes in the form of a binary code.

62.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein a position of the surface of the preparation is detected before the sample punching procedure and detected position values are saved in conjunction with an identifier for the preparation.

63.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein a position of the surface of the sample carrier is detected before the hole-punching procedure and detected position values are saved in conjunction with an identifier for the sample carrier.

64.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein punching depth of the sample punching and hole punching can be selected and assigned to the marking.

65.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the sample punching is started automatically after the placement of a last marking on a last preparation.

66.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 65, wherein the sample punching procedure can be interrupted and continued.

67.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein all holes are punched out from the sample carrier before the start of sample punching procedure.

68.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[40]] 43 or 44, wherein the sample punching needle and/or hole punching needle are cleaned at least after several sample punchings and/or hole punchings.

69.-81. (Canceled)